Tainted Grail
Kings of Ruin

Start Here!

This Open & Play guide helps you set up a simple single-player adventure and walks you through it step by step. Built for approximately 1-2 hours of play, it uses only one character and includes no spoilers for the main campaign. The purpose of this Open & Play is to give you a general concept of how the game works. Don't worry if some elements of the cards or some parts of the rules are left unexplained – they are not used in this adventure and will be explained at the start of the full game.

It wasn't supposed to end like that.

Right about now, you should have been drinking mead with the rest of your warband, counting the gold you earned, and telling tall tales of your deeds during your first battle.

Instead, you're running for your life alone, lugging your heavy equipment up a steep mountain pass while your lungs almost burst from exertion.

As you approach the top, the dawn comes behind you, but it brings no hope. The sun rises dimly in the east, obscured by the smoke coming from the land you just left. The land you failed to defend.

On your cheeks, tears mix with ash. The taste of failure is more bitter than the choking air the wind pushes up the path. The Ironwall Brigade lost. Lothian, Avalon's most civilized human kingdom, is overrun by hordes of wyrd-warped humans. You've seen many of your close friends die, and others scattered to the winds in all directions. You pause and look back, but neither allies nor enemies have followed you into the mountains. Are they all dead?

"Gerdwyn?"

You wheel around, bringing your crossbow up. It takes you a second to remember this massive weapon is now useless. Most of your bolts were spent in the battle and the last few you let loose at the foot of this path to keep the wyrd-warped at bay. You sling the weapon back and grab the knife instead. A tall shape emerges from the shadow between the rocks.

"Gerdwyn, it's me," the man says. "The commander left me here to direct any survivors. There's a boat waiting by the pier near the Slavepath. We'll use it to get everyone to safety."

So, there is hope after all! Some of your brothers and sisters are alive and even found a way to get out of this place.

You need to rejoin them. After all, they're the only family you ever had.

1. Unpack Your Models

Gerdwyn

2 waystone models

To start, **take the Gerdwyn Character model**, and **2 waystone models out of the box and place them in front of you**. There are 4 Characters available in the game – unlikely heroes, each with their own purpose, bound by the same direction they travel, and the same fear, but for this Tutorial, you play as Gerdwyn.

The strange statues are the WAYSTONES. Their origin and gameplay function will be explained during your adventure, but for now you should know that waystones protect the people of Avalon from the corrupting power of wyrdness and keep the game's double-sided Location cards safe to Travel and Explore.

Gerdwyn's high Health and easy-to-play Combat are a perfect combination for your first experience.

2. Prepare Markers & Tokens

Red universal MARKERS are used in many different ways throughout the game. **Take some out of the box and set them aside in a pile.**

Apart from the markers, you will need a couple of **TIME MARKERS** (plastic pieces that resemble an hourglass). **Place them next to the universal markers.**

Setup visualization

The complete setup will look like this:

3. Take Gerdwyn's Character Tray

Take the green CHARACTER TRAY (shown on visualization) out of the box. You can find the full explanation of all icons and slots in the RULEBOOK, for now the most important part is the triple TRACK used for managing your:

- **ENERGY** – your basic stamina utilized mostly by Travel, Location Actions, and during Exploration. It is regenerated each Day.
- **HEALTH** – your physical condition. Health limits your maximum Energy – can never be higher than your .
- **TERROR** – your creeping madness. Some Actions or Encounters of Avalon may be terrifying and will increase your Terror.

You should also note Gerdwyn's unique **Character Action** (Hunt) and her **Weakness** (Overloaded), listed in the middle of her Character Tray.

4. Set Up Your Character

The default starting state of each Character is marked on their Character Tray.

First, **find the L-shaped HEALTH MARKER in the box.**

Place this marker in the starting Health track slot, highlighted by two red chevrons (slot number 8 for Gerdwyn). **Place one red marker in your Energy and Terror tracks**, situated on the left and right of the Health track. Their starting slots are also highlighted by red chevrons. This means Gerdwyn starts with 6 Energy and 0 Terror.

Then, let's set up Gerdwyn's ATTRIBUTES. **Place red markers in the Attribute slots along the left and right edge of the Tray, highlighted by two red chevrons.** This means Gerdwyn starts with 1 Aggression, 1 Courage, 2 Practicality, and 1 Caution.

Do not place anything in the Food, Wealth, Experience, or Magic slots. Gerdwyn starts this Tutorial with no resources!

5. Unpack the Open & Play Deck

Your box contains a specially marked 24-card deck used in the Open & Play experience. It includes all standard-sized cards you will need in this Tutorial. **Find and open this deck now. Don't shuffle it or alter its contents in any way!** If you've already shuffled the Open & Play deck, place the 3 "Your First Encounter" cards on the bottom of this deck, 10 Diplomacy cards in the middle and 10 Combat cards on the top.

6. Set Up Combat and Diplomacy Decks

Remove the top card from your Open & Play deck and set it aside. You won't need it.

Below it, there's a 10-card COMBAT DECK. **Take all 10 cards with the COMBAT back, and set them to the left of your Character Tray,** next to the Combat-oriented Attributes .

Below the Combat cards is your DIPLOMACY DECK. **Take all 10 cards with the DIPLOMACY back and place them to the right of your Character tray,** next to the Diplomacy-oriented Attributes .

7. Set Up Your Encounter Decks

The final Open & Play cards are the three ENCOUNTERS, each of a different color. **Place them to the side, as shown on the visualization**, so that "Your First Encounter" text is visible. These 3 decks represent different dangers awaiting you in Tainted Grail:

- The GREEN deck contains natural threats such as animals or legendary beasts, as well as outlaws and other travelers who roam the wild. Many of these Encounters grant Food when defeated.
- The PURPLE deck contains mysterious and supernatural threats. You will have to discover its significance yourself.
- The BLUE deck is used mostly when you visit Settlements and it contains dangerous situations, as well as personal and diplomatic challenges.

However, in this Tutorial each Encounter deck only contains a single card!

8. Take 5 Starting Location Cards

Find the deck of oversized cards in the box. Place all Boss Encounter cards in the box and set all Help cards aside. Then, take the top 5 cards (they show sections of the map and are numbered **109**, **110**, **111**, **127,** and **150**) **and set them aside**. These are LOCATIONS you will explore during the game. Some of them contain an ACTION that may be performed with a cost, an INSTANT EFFECT ( ) that is resolved immediately after a Character enters a Location, and each may be EXPLORED, revealing the story and additional interactions in the Exploration Journal.

9. Set Up Your Starting Location

Every Location card is double-sided. You can distinguish the Clear side by the ( ) icon next to the Location's number. The other side is dangerous and covered in wyrdness. It also has a corresponding icon next to the Location's number ( ).

Place Location 111 above the Character Tray, side up. Whenever you reveal a new Location, make sure to familiarize yourself with everything written on the card. Even the lore on the bottom or the art might hide some important information.

Place your Character model on this Location card. Notice, there is a effect on the card but ignore it for now.

As traveling in wyrdness can be dangerous we need something to disperse it. This is where the waystones come in handy. In this Open & Play, waystone placement is predefined to allow a smooth rules explanation and better experience.

Place a waystone model in the top-left corner of the Location 111. Note that it won't be fully placed in Location 111 as waystone may cover up to 4 neighbouring Location cards.

Flip Location 111 to its side – *Stoneteeth Knolls*. The Gerdwyn model and waystone model should remain in the same place in the now flipped Location.

10. Build the Starting Map Section

It's time to expand your map.

In a standard game, whenever you TRAVEL to a new Location, you will attach new Location cards to its sides, matching the Direction Keys on their edges.

For now:

- **Attach** *King's Pass* **(110) to the left edge of your starting Location** (*Stoneteeth Knolls* **(111),** ⊕ **side up**. The waystone model you already placed in Location **111** should now sit both on the top-left corner of Location **111**, and the top-right corner of Location **110**.
- **Attach** *Slavepath* **(150),** ⊕ **side up, to the bottom edge of Location 111. Then, place a second waystone model in the only available slot of Location 150 (bottom-right).**
- **Set aside Locations 109 and 127** – your Character will reveal them later in her Travels.

11. Exploration Journal, Help Cards, and Rulebook

Take the EXPLORATION JOURNAL and set it aside. The Exploration Journal has a corresponding section for every Location in Tainted Grail. Interacting with a Location through the Journal is how you progress the story. For this Tutorial, you will only use a special part of the Journal – the Tutorial Exploration Journal with a Tutorial Book of Secrets printed on the last pages of the Exploration Journal book.

Take 3 Help cards (ORDER OF THE DAY, COMBAT ENCOUNTERS, and ICON GLOSSARY) and place them near Location cards.

They list available Actions, Turn order, explain icons found throughout the game, and contain other helpful information!

You may also refer to the RULEBOOK to read more about various aspects of the game, but it's not necessary to finish this Tutorial.

12. Status Sheet

Find the STATUS SHEETS and take one of them. Each small box visible on this sheet is a STATUS. In Tainted Grail, many of your choices are remembered by marking these statuses. Don't worry – even if you mark something during this Tutorial, you will still be able to use the same status sheet to play the full campaign.

13. That's it!

A standard game of Tainted Grail makes use of many other components, such as Event cards that provide you with Quests, Items that you can acquire in a few different ways, or the Chapter Setup cards. However, for this Tutorial, everything you need will be found in this brochure and in the Tutorial Exploration Journal that will be referenced later.

If you haven't yet read the story introduction at the beginning of this guide, **do so now**.

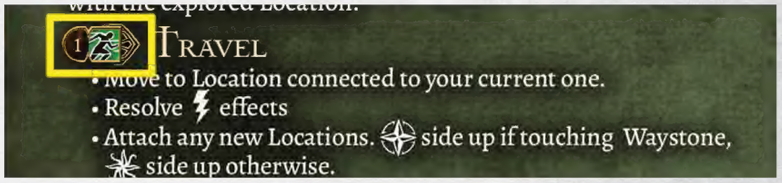
Part 1: Start of the Day

It's now dawn. Gerdwyn is ready to start her journey south, following the directions she received from a member of the Ironwall Brigade. Nothing will happen during your first Start of the Day, but lets go through all the steps, following the order listed on the dark green Help Card (ORDER OF THE DAY):

- There are no Start of the Day effects available for you to resolve, and no Time Markers (⧗) to remove.
- Every Location is touching a waystone, so you don't flip any Location to the wyrdness side.
- No Guardians are roaming around, so you can skip the step related to them.
- Finally, there are no Events to reveal, as they are not used in this Tutorial.

Part 2: First Travel

After the Start of the Day, Characters may perform ACTIONS. Each Action in Tainted Grail is marked with a special icon that also shows its cost. You can find explanation of each Action on one of the Help cards (ACTIONS OVERVIEW).


1
Travel
• Move to Location connected to your current one.
• Resolve ϟ effects
• Attach any new Locations. ⊕ side up if touching Waystone, ✳ side up otherwise.

As her first Action, Gerdwyn moves toward her first destination – the old pier near the Slavepath.

Perform the Travel Action – pay 1 (move the marker on the track from 6 to 5) and then **move Gerdwyn to** the *Slavepath* **(150).** As you arrive there, before you check if there are any Locations connected to the Slavepath that you could reveal, you must **resolve the Instant effect** (the rule marked with the ϟ icon). In this case, an automatic Encounter is triggered as soon as you enter the Location. **Place 2 ⧗ on the Location card** – as you saw, the Start of Day had a step that instructs you to remove ⧗ from Locations. Placing them indicates that the ϟ Action will not trigger for the number of Days equal to the number of ⧗. It's time for your first combat!

Take the green Encounter card you've placed near the map during the setup. Place it face up so that you have plenty of free space to the right of the Encounter card.

Part 3: First Combat Turn

Read the Encounter card carefully. To win, you need to gather a number of markers in the Combat Pool equal to or higher than the Encounter value, which can be found next to the Encounter name (in this case: 5). To gain these markers, you play Combat cards from your hand. **Prepare two Help Cards – one with the Combat Encounters and one with the Icon Glossary**. If you have accidedentally mixed the Combat deck, you may recreate it by sorting Gerdwyn's Combat cards from 1 (top card) to 10 (bottom card). Card numbers are located along their bottom edge. Now, let's go through your first Combat step by step:

- **Draw 3 cards from your Combat deck**. Remember not to shuffle your deck in this Tutorial!
- **Check the Enemy Traits** – you can find it above the Attack table. This specific one will trigger after the Encounter ends, so ignore it for now.
- You don't need to pick an Active Character (you're alone, so only Gerdwyn may Activate).
- You also ignore the Delayed Abilities step (there aren't any Abilities in play yet).

• Time to fight! Both the Encounter card and your Combat cards have Keys . Playing Encounters essentially means connecting Keys to get Bonuses and using card's Abilities. **Play the Disabling Bolt card. Attach it to the right edge of the Encounter, as seen below**. This causes both halves of the Key, Key, and Key to connect.

• You only gain the Bonuses (right half of the Key) from connected Attribute Keys if you have the specific Attribute level (left half of the Key). **Take a look at your Character Tray**. Gerdwyn has 1, 1, and 2, so all of the connected Keys grant her Bonuses. Going from top to bottom:
• The Key grants the Bonus – ignore it, as it has no effect now and will be explained later.
• The Key grants you the Bonus – **put one marker in the Combat Pool** – (above the Encounter card).
• The Key also gives you a – **put another marker in the Combat Pool**.
• The bottom key (Free Key) always connects and has no requirements, just the multiplier. However, there's nothing to multiply this time.
• **Now, let's check the text of the Disabling Bolt card**. It has an Ability that triggers now, On Placement, as shown by the icon. **There is one Character in play (Gerdwyn), so you gain . Place them in the Combat Pool.**
• The card also has a Ability that triggers during the Enemy Attack step so you don't have to worry about it now.
• Each turn, you may only play one card, plus as many additional cards as you can connect using their Bonus icons, which is granted when playing the Combat card. This means any further cards you play this turn would require you to connect the Bonus on each of them!
• **Play the Silver Bolt –** you may do it because it contains a Bonus on the Free Key. **Notice that you cover up a previous card,** so the Ability of Disabling Bolt disappears and won't trigger anymore.

• Silver Bolt has one other connected Key, containing the Attribute and a Bonus icon, **so draw 1 Combat card**.
• **The Ability of the Silver Bolt now triggers**, but does nothing, because you are fighting a green Encounter, not purple.
• **Play one more card – Defend**. It contains a that connects to the Key on the previous card. Notice that there are 2 icons on the Silver Bolt card, which means that you need at least 2 of that Attribute in order to gain the Key Bonus, which Gerdwyn has. It also contains a that connects to the , but gaining this Key's Bonus is optional and requires you to pay 1 Magic. Gerdwyn has no Magic, so ignore it for now.

• Defend has three Abilities. The first one instructs you to **put a on this card – do it now**. The second is a so-called Delayed Ability that will be resolved during the next Delayed Abilities step, when you remove the final from the card. Unless, of course, you cover the Ability with another card. Finally, the Ability will trigger during the Enemy Attack.
• You have one card left in your hand, but playing a second Defend won't do much in this case. **Proceed to the next phase.**
• **It's time for the Large Wyrdrat to Attack**. In Tainted Grail, each enemy has many different moves depending on the value of the Combat Pool. There are 4 markers in the Combat Pool. **Check the Large Wyrdrat card – with 3 to 4 markers in the Combat Pool, the Attack deals 1.** But before you apply the damage, **look at the last card in the Sequence!** It has a Ability that triggers during the Enemy Attack, Preventing 2. **That means this time you lose no .** Additionally, the icon means that this effect applies to all Party members, but since there are no other players in this Tutorial, ignore it.
• During the End of Turn, you must discard until you have 3 cards in your hand. You have only 1 card, so this doesn't apply. Now, **draw 1 Combat card.**

Part 4: Second Combat Turn

• The next turn begins. **First check the Sequence for any Delayed Abilities**. Defend has a ⌛. **Remove it and resolve** ⌛✗ **– draw 1 Combat card.**
• **Play Powerful Bolt**. The 🔑 Key connects, you meet the requirements, so **put** 🔴 **in the Combat Pool**. Additionally, its Free Key gives you 🔴 more.

• **Perform the Victory Check** – there are 7 markers in the Combat Pool, compared to the Encounter's value of 5, which means Gerdwyn has won! The Loot is 1 Food – **place one marker in the Food slot of Gerdwyn's Character Tray. Additionaly remove the Encounter card from the game**, as the Trait requires you to do. If at any point of the Combat Encounter the number of markers in the Combat pool is higher than or equal to the Encounter's Value, you win! The Victory is immediate – do not resolve any remaining effects.
• **Now, return all played, drawn, or discarded cards to your Combat deck. Then, shuffle the deck.**

Part 5: First Exploration

Now, it's time for a second Action of the Day. To discover anything that Locations are hiding and unravel the story, Characters must Explore. That's why, as your next Action, **Explore the** *Slavepath* **Location**.

The Explore Action is free. To initiate it simply **go to the Tutorial Exploration Journal** printed on the last pages of the Exploration Journal book. There, **find the appropriate section** (**150** – *Slavepath*), and **start reading**!

Part 6: First Location Action

Your pockets are empty, and you need something to trade for the medicine. Fortunately, the *Slavepath* Location has an Action: "Explore the Fomorian Ruins" that provides you with 1 Magic – important resource that you can pay during Encounters to gain Bonuses from connected blue Magic Keys ( ), or exchange for other goods.

To activate the Location Action, **pay its cost** (2). Gerdwyn gains 1 Magic – **take 1 marker and place it in the Magic slot of your Character Tray.**

Part 7: Traveling to King's Pass

Now it's time to head to the settlement and get the medicine. **Pay 2 and resolve two Travel Actions, one after the other** – first to the *Stoneteeth Knolls* (**111**) and then to the *King's Pass* (**110**).

• After the second Travel Action, Gerdwyn ends up with less than 2 , so **she loses 1 due to her Weakness listed on her Character Tray.**
• The Location has a ⚡ icon – you must resolve it now. **Put 2 ⌛ on the Location card and draw a blue Encounter**. Unfortunately, the people of King's Pass are not very friendly. Unlike your previous Encounter, this is a Diplomatic challenge! A very inquisitive and likely drunk man stops you as you enter the Location.
• **Place the blue Encounter card face up in front so that you have plenty of space to the right of this card.**

Part 8: First Diplomacy Turn

Diplomatic Encounters are similar to Combat Encounters. The main difference is that instead of gathering markers in the Combat Pool, you will engage in a tug-of-war on the Affinity track, visible on the left edge of the Encounter card.

Diplomatic Encounters have a time in which you must finish the Encounter, called DURATION ◯ that is tracked with a DURATION DIE. To win, you will try to move the marker on the Affinity track from its starting possition (S) to the green or gray slot when the time runs out.

Prepare two Help Cards – one with the Diplomatic Encounters and one with the Icon Glossary. Take out the DURATION DIE (D10) and place it near the Encounter, with "2" facing up. This is the starting Duration of the Encounter and it is marked above the Encounter's name. This means that if nothing modifies the die, the Encounter will last two turns. The drunk who hailed you won't talk long. There are many ways to manipulate Duration, so even if it started with the Duration die set to 2, you may gain or lose Duration to shorten or lengthen the Encounter.

• **Draw 3 cards from your Diplomacy deck**. Remember not to shuffle your deck in this Tutorial! If you did, set cards from 1 (top card) to 10 (bottom card).
• **Place the marker on the S slot of the Affinity track**. It is the starting point.

• **Play the Impatience card**. It has the ♈ symbol in the closing half of the 🔑 Key– a special Diplomacy Bonus that varies depending on the Encounter card and Attribute that it corresponds to. Gerdwyn doesn't have the 🔑 Attribute though, so the bonus of ♈ doesn't apply here. The Free Key Bonus also doesn't apply, because there is a 0x in the opening half.
• Your card has the ⬇ effect, that instructs you to place 2 charges – **put 2 markers on the Impatience card to represent it**. You may use this card's Ability to discard the last card in the Sequence, unless there are no more markers on the card (each time you decide to destroy a card, remove one marker).

• You don't want to play any additional cards for now so it's time for the Enemy Response. First, Lose 1 – **turn the Duration die to "1".** Next, ↓ – **move the marker on the Affinity track 1 slot down**.

• During the End of Turn, you must discard until you have 3 cards in your hand. You are under the limit, so this doesn't apply. Now, **draw 1 Diplomacy card**.

Part 9: Second Diplomacy Turn

• The new turn begins. There are no cards in the Sequence that have Delayed Abilities so you can go directly to the Playing Cards step.

• **Play the Stubbornness card**. Notice that the Impatience card has opening halves of the Keys on the right side – this is because it's a Passive card. Passive cards always have their effects visible and are never covered by other cards.

• Now resolve all effects. Gain the Free Key bonus ↑ – **move the marker on the Affinity track 1 slot up**.

• This card's text Ability will trigger only if this card is discarded from the Sequence (), so let's do it!

• You happen to have an Impatience card that lets you discard a card from the Sequence. **Pay 1 charge, removing the marker from the Impatience card.** Then, discard Stubbornness – **put it in your discard pile** next to your Diplomacy deck. This causes you **to move the marker on the Affinity track 1 slot up and to draw 1 Diplomacy card**.

• As in Combat, to play any card beyond the first, you need the Bonus, so the only card you can play now is Intimidation – **place it in the Sequence**. The Bonuses don't apply, because the only Diplomacy Attribute Gerdwyn has is . However, you gain the Free Key Bonus, so **move the marker on the Affinity track 1 slot up.**

• The marker on the Affinity track is now on the green slot, which means the CONCLUSION is in your favor if the Encounter would finish now, but first you must resolve the effect – **discard Intimidation and Impatience cards and put them in your discard pile.** To Lose 1 , finish your turn and go to the Enemy Response phase, as lowering Duration is the first thing this Encounter does during this phase. When the reaches 0, do not resolve any other effects afterward, so in this case, you lose 1 – **turn the Duration die to "0" and then, you ignore the ↓ effect.**

• The Diplomatic Encounter is over! Now resolve the outcome – **place 1 marker in the Wealth slot and 1 marker in the Food slot.**
• Now, resolve the Trait as it triggers at the end of the Encounter, **and remove the Encounter card from the game.**
• **Return all played, drawn, or discarded cards to Gerdwyn's Diplomacy deck and shuffle the deck.**

Part 10: Entering the King's Pass

After resolving the Location Action, you check whether your Travel revealed any new Location cards and it actually did. *King's Pass* has 2 Direction Keys aiming toward empty spaces. **Attach Location 109 below and Location 127 to the left side of** *King's Pass*, both wyrdness side up, as there are no waystones to light them up.

It's now time to Explore this Location and find the medicine you were looking for. **Go to the** *King's Pass* **Section (110) of the Tutorial Exploration Journal.**

Part 11: Ending the Day

Gerdwyn is wounded and has 0 left. If you look at the Energy track, the slot marked as 0 is red and has the "Exhausted" sign. **Now, resolve the End of the Day steps using your Help Card (ORDER OF THE DAY):**

• There are no End of the Day effects available for you to resolve.
• In the Rest step, since Gerdwyn is Exhausted, she gains 4 instead of the maximum value. Place **a marker on the slot 4 of the track.**
• In the Recover step – **discard 1 marker from the Food slot of Gerdwyn's Tray.** Gerdwyn gains **1 (move her Health marker 1 slot up).** If she has any , she loses **1** point of . Recovering also grants you 1 additional – **move the marker on the Energy track one slot higher (to 5).**
• You are in a Clear Location so you don't suffer from wyrdness.
• Skip the Advance your Character and Modify your Decks steps as you don't have any Exp points to spend.
• You can't experience any Visions, as there is no icon on this Location card.
• Then, a new Day begins.

Part 12: Start of the Second Day

Perform the Start of the Day, just like before:

• **Remove 1 from** *Slavepath* **(150) and** *King's Pass* **(110) Location cards.**
• **Flip** *The Slavepath* **(150) Location** to its wyrdness side . This Location no longer touches any waystone, so it became covered in wyrdness. The stays on the Location card, but the effect will still trigger. You can distinguish it by the presence of different icons ( ).

Part 13: The Way Back

You have to go back to save Kealan! Perform two Travel Actions: **pay 1 and move Gerdwyn to Location 111, and then pay 1 more to move to Location 150.**

Location **150** now contains a new effect – whenever you enter it, you will gain 1 due to the corrupting effects of wyrdness. Then, you'll go to **Verse 626** in the Book of Secrets: a part of the Exploration Journal used to hide many secret Verses and interactions. **Move the marker on your track up.** Then, **go to Verse 626 in the Tutorial Book of Secrets** (in the Tutorial Exploration Journal) to experience the last part of Gerdwyn's story. Important: **do not go to the regular Book of Secrets that is used in the standard campaign!**

Part 14: Wrap-up

While this Tutorial gives players a general grasp of the game, there are many additional rules it does not cover, such as Parties and Party Actions, Event cards, Chapter setup, and so on. Before playing a full campaign, we encourage you to read the full Rulebook at least once!